

# The Anglicising of Scottish Episcopalianism

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When, after the Revolution of 1688, William of Orange had become king in both England and Scotland, there were not a few churchmen on both sides of the border who felt, in all conscience, that their oath of allegiance to James II and VII could not honourably be broken. While some of these simply retired into obscurity, remaining in communion with their respective national churches, others saw their position evolve into one in which they formed small, separate, parallel churches. In Scotland, however, this nonjuring point of view had an extra dimension, in that the new political settlement there had involved yet another of those swings of the pendulum which had, more than once, since the Reformation, seen the abolition — whether *de jure* or *de facto* — of episcopacy in the national church, and the triumph, at least temporarily, of presbyterian polity. Thus, right from the beginning, the Scottish nonjurors, who remained episcopalian in church organisation, differed in more than simply political allegiance from the national church from which they had separated. When, therefore, the end of an effective Stuart alternative to the reigning Hanoverians in the late eighteenth century allowed the reconciliation of all but a few of the most eccentric of the southern nonjurors to the Church of England, there would have been considerable difficulties, even if nonjuring theology had not developed as it had, in bringing about a similar return to the established church by their Scottish counterparts.

Nonjuring theology had, however, developed considerably on both sides of the border. To the north of it, this was not simply a matter of the Scots assimilating English ideas, though the heritage of the English “Caroline divines” was certainly one of the most influential of the various strands of thinking which fed into the evolving trans-national consensus. Both sets of nonjurors had, in the century or so since their separation from their respective established churches, retained and sometimes jealously guarded their autonomy as national churches. Mutual influence at the theological level had, however, been considerable, and they had evolved together a theology with a heavy stress on patristic sources. For many of the English nonjurors, this development did not imply a doctrinal separation from the Church of England, in which such a stress had long been an influential aspect of theological thinking. For the Scottish nonjurors, however, this was not the case. Their theology, though not without Scottish as well as English roots, was

now far removed from the mild Calvinism which they had shared with many of their established brethren in the years immediately after their separation. Moreover, the removal of their influence in maintaining in the established church a “high” Calvinism, with its roots in the tradition represented by the “Aberdeen Doctors” of the early seventeenth century, had been instrumental in the eclipse of that tradition in that church as the eighteenth century progressed. Thus the gap in Scotland between the theology of the nonjurors and that of the established church was now very considerable. Both had developed, without the checks that interaction with the opposing party would have provided, what had originally been opposing trends in the theology of the pre-Revolution church.

With its various facets, then, including a far stronger emphasis on the importance of episcopacy than at the time of the Revolution, the theology of the Scottish episcopalians of the late eighteenth century left them, unlike their English brethren, with no alternative but a continued separation from the established church. For members of this “true” Church of Scotland, with their own succession of bishops, the only immediate outcome of the effective end of a Stuart claim to the throne was that they could, now that they were not seen as a political threat, expect the legal toleration which they had been denied for much of the last hundred years. A further consequence was to arise, however, from the existence of English “qualified” congregations in Scotland — bodies which had, with legal approbation, worshipped using the English liturgy under clergy of English ordination. The somewhat irregular position that these bodies occupied, as episcopalians without bishops, could obviously be remedied by assimilation to the native episcopal church, a move which the vast majority (though initially not all) of the members of the latter body saw as highly desirable as a symbol of their new-found respectability.

In practice, the two bodies already had much in common. The English Book of Common Prayer had long been used by the Scottish nonjuring congregations for most services — not because of its English provenance but, initially, because of its ready availability at a time when producing a native book was impracticable. If, on the basis of patristic usage, the nonjurors occasionally modified an English service or even, as in the case of the Communion Service, also drastically reordered it, few saw in this any reason for continued separation. The theologically unsophisticated English worshipper attending a Scottish nonjuring service at this time would have noticed little, in fact, that was unfamiliar to him, unless it was the dress of the clergy, which was still (and was to remain for another generation) in the Scots Reformation tradition which eschewed the use of the surplice. The only doubt in the minds of a significant number of members of the

qualified congregations was that the native body had never, in fact, subscribed to that great symbol of Anglican orthodoxy, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and it soon became clear that this would be a precondition for union. Many of those brought up in the nonjuring tradition were unhappy about this, in that they were aware that their theological heritage was such as to preclude some common, “evangelical” interpretations of the articles. Given that the qualified congregations did not seem to object to nonjuring opinions and customs, however (as long as they did not have to adopt them themselves), and were willing to allow the Scottish Communion Office to be the eucharistic doctrinal standard of the united church, such doubters allowed themselves to be persuaded that their caution was excessive.

At a Convocation at Laurencekirk in 1804, the native body adopted the articles in order, as it was put, “to exhibit a public testimony of our conformity in doctrine and discipline with the Church of England, and thereby to remove every remaining obstacle to the union of the Episcopalians in Scotland”.<sup>1</sup> The effect was that desired: within a few years all but a handful of the previously qualified congregations were formally assimilated, although in practice, under the terms of the agreement of union, largely unaffected by those qualities which tended to distinguish the old native episcopalians from the Church of England. As far as the previously nonjuring congregations were concerned, however, there was certainly an effect on some of the externals of worship and nomenclature, which tended to move them even further from the customs of the pre-Revolution church than they had already gone. The surplice was first recommended (1811) and then insisted upon (1838); strict conformity with the English prayer book for morning and evening prayer was required (1828), the English term “rector” was adopted for the incumbent of a charge, and the term “priest” began to displace the Scots term “presbyter”; the kirk session which some episcopalians had retained in the eighteenth century was replaced by a “vestry” on English lines. This change in externals was not always accompanied by deeper changes of understanding, however, and the long-term effect of this tendency towards an English-based uniformity was that there was a tension between those who had a “native” — that is, nationalist and, in the theological sense, nonjuring — perspective on church matters, and those who saw themselves as little more than the Church of England abroad. In the years around the middle of the century, this tension was to be exacerbated by a number of factors which will be the subject of this study. This characteristic of mid-nineteenth century Scottish episcopalianism has, however, been largely

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Neale, *The Life and Times of Patrick Torry D.D.* . . . (London, 1846), 45.



misinterpreted or overlooked by its (few) historians, and this perhaps requires some preliminary explanation.

Crudely, the problem has been that this period of episcopalian history has been studied either through romanticising Anglo-catholic spectacles or in the light of work produced by such study. Because of this, the common view has been that the period in which we are interested saw the birth pangs of a "catholic" theological outlook, which had been present in embryonic form in the mid-eighteenth-century nonjuring approach, and for which English tractarianism acted as the midwife.<sup>2</sup> There is, we shall argue, an alternative interpretation which contains at least as much truth: that the struggles of the mid-nineteenth century represent not birth-pangs but death-throes. They were, we shall argue, the last struggle of the last influential remnant of proponents of what Jardine Grisbrooke has labelled — perhaps unfortunately, given the Scottish as well as English roots of its later manifestations — as "classical high Anglicanism". This tradition, he has suggested, had an approach to doctrine which was "not the same as that of modern Anglo-catholicism, which latter would appear to have little or no precedent in Anglican history since the Reformation",<sup>3</sup> and this distinctiveness of doctrine will constitute an important part of our argument.

The period of the transition in question began with the assimilation of the qualified congregations in the first decade of the century, but the tension inherent in that supposedly happy union only really manifested itself in the early 1840s, with an attack on the nonjuring theological tradition by English "evangelicals". It may be said to have reached its climax in 1863, in which year a new code of canons formalised the dominance of the English (and to some extent the tractarian) element in the church. Within only a very few years of that, any genuine adherence to the nonjuring theological tradition had become (and perhaps remains to this day) a feeble rearguard action, notwithstanding the "rediscovery" of the Scottish Liturgy towards the end of the nineteenth century. A study of this central period — 1840 to 1863 — is, therefore, important not only for an understanding of a small and largely unknown province of the Anglican communion, but also — and perhaps primarily — for the light it sheds on the development of "classical high Anglican" theology in the period during which English tractarianism became influential — a development masked, south of the border, by the lack of prominence there of the older tradition at the time of the transition.

<sup>2</sup> Of some merit, though still suffering from the romanticism of previous studies, are: W. Perry, *The Oxford Movement in Scotland* (Cambridge, 1933), M. Lochhead, *Episcopal Scotland in the Nineteenth Century* (London 1966).

<sup>3</sup> W. Jardine Grisbrooke, *Anglican Liturgies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1958), xv.

The discontinuity in high Anglican doctrine that such a study unveils is not, however, entirely unblurred in the Scottish context. The tangle of motivation and strategy of those involved in the arguments of the period is not always easy to unravel. There were those, for example, who attempted to use the Scottish tradition to foster Anglican-Orthodox relations, whose motivation was more straightforward than their strategy.<sup>4</sup> There were others, by far the majority of the defenders of the native tradition, who were, as we shall see, motivated as much by a sort of ecclesiastical nationalism as by anything else, tending to see it as their “duty . . . both as Churchmen and as Scotchmen, in other words, in a religious and patriotic sense, to stand up manfully in defence of our national, eucharistic Service”.<sup>5</sup>

The threat to the continued use and doctrinal pre-eminence of that service — the Scottish Liturgy of 1764 — was the chief focus for all the battles of the period. After the adoption of the Thirty-Nine Articles, it was the one formal distinctive feature of the Episcopal Church as against the Church of England, canonically the standard for eucharistic doctrine as well as the normative rite, to which the English service was a permitted — and, in practice, numerically dominant — alternative. Although it was understood by many on the Scottish side that the Laurencekirk convocation had adopted the English articles in combination, not only with the Scottish liturgy but also with a number of “patristic” customs, including “the well-understood traditionary practices which received the illixture, the Reservation, and the Cross in confirmation”,<sup>6</sup> it was only the liturgy that constituted a formal distinctiveness.

The background to the setting up of the communion office in question has been explored in a number of studies.<sup>7</sup> Its structure and content evidently owed much to the nonjurors’ characteristic appeal to antiquity, as exhibited in the southern nonjurors’ offices of 1718 and 1734,<sup>8</sup> which evidently had some influence on its form. The dominant influence was, however, a native work — Thomas Rattray’s office and rubrics of 1744, based on his reconstruction of “The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem”.<sup>9</sup> Though this was “too far removed in character from

<sup>4</sup> C. Knight “Anglican or Orthodox? — The Scottish Dimension of the ‘Palmer Affair’”, in *Sobornost/ECR* 7: 1 (1985), 25ff. (This paper expands on some of the issues of interest here.)

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Record Office [SRO], MS. letter Bp. Torry to Dean Torry; MS. 2395 Episcopal Chest.

<sup>6</sup> St Andrews University, MS. letter W. Bright to G. H. Forbes in uncatalogued deposit 19/2 attached to the G. H. Forbes Library, University of St Andrews.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. J. Dowden, *The Scottish Communion Office 1764* (Oxford, 1922).

<sup>8</sup> See J. Grisbrooke, *Anglican Liturgies*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

the service with which both priests and people were familiar to allow it any chance of being adopted in its own form",<sup>10</sup> its structure was of great importance in what was to follow. That "wonderful harmony and agreement",<sup>11</sup> which Rattray and others before him had noted in the structure of almost all known ancient liturgies, was to strengthen a trend already evident among the Scottish nonjurors, exemplified by the 1735 edition of the Scottish Liturgy of 1637, rearranged with "All the parts . . . ranked in the natural order".<sup>12</sup> By the time of the publication of the Office of 1764, a number of unofficial "wee bookies" of this sort had been put into circulation.

This new edition, however, though arguably of questionable status canonically, was soon to become normative in practice among the nonjuring congregations, and was undoubtedly the liturgy to which the qualified congregations gave assent on assimilation — despite what evangelical polemicists around the middle of the nineteenth century were to claim. Of the fifty-eight nonjuring congregations with weekly services towards the end of the eighteenth century, only one, according to Bishop Torry,<sup>13</sup> did not use the office of 1764 for its communion services, and even there, a version of the English service re-ordered according to "primitive" principles was used. Torry's further claim that the Office was always "to the entire delight and edification of the recipients"<sup>14</sup> must, however, be seen as a polemical oversimplification, in view of the attempt at revision by Bishop Abernethy-Drummond at the time in question. With the assimilation of the qualified congregations after 1804, however, the Scottish Office rapidly became a rarity, to be experienced mainly in the old nonjuring strongholds of the north-east. By 1851, of twenty-two episcopalian clergy in the diocese of Edinburgh, only one was using it — a situation exactly mirrored in the other southern diocese of Glasgow and Galloway. By contrast, in the diocese of Aberdeen at that time, eighteen of the twenty-three charges always used the Scottish office for the communion service, and one other used it alternately with the English.<sup>15</sup>

Until about 1840, the use of either of the permitted services was a matter simply of local custom. The old nonjuring congregations tended to adhere to their old rite (though not without

<sup>10</sup> Dowden, *Scottish Communion Office*, 92.

<sup>11</sup> J. Grisbrooke, *Anglican Liturgies* 137. (The sequence of institution, anamnesis-oblation, epiclesis in the eucharistic prayer was seen as particularly crucial.)

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>13</sup> P. Torry, *A Pastoral Letter* . . . (Edinburgh, 1846), 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Figures from tables in the *Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal*, i (Edinburgh, 1851), 94ff.



exceptions), while the qualified ones continued with the English one as before. Newly formed congregations, of which there were not a few, almost invariably adopted the English service, since the spread of episcopalian allegiance in these years was closely tied to English and Irish immigration, and to the anglophilism which was, at this time, “the prevailing attitude of the landed and professional classes”.<sup>16</sup> In the early 1840s, however, two congregations seceded from the Episcopal Church, claiming the right to do this — but to remain in communion with the Church of England — under the legislation which had originally allowed the qualified congregations to be set up. This, though redundant, had never been repealed, so that they could claim, with legal if not with ecclesiological justification, that the law allowed, “up to the present moment, English ordained ministers to officiate in Scotland, irrespective of the jurisdiction of Scotch bishops”.<sup>17</sup> The dispute quickly came to focus on the doctrine allegedly contained in the Scottish liturgy which, it was claimed, was contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. The effects of this attack by English evangelicalism — a relatively new phenomenon among Scottish episcopalians — were quickly felt throughout their church.

Like most liturgies, the 1764 Office was capable of bearing a variety of interpretations, though less so, almost certainly, than was the English service to which it was now being seen as opposed. The eucharistic theology of its compilers was, however, clear, and is well summed up in the words of Rattray himself:

“The priest rehearseth the history of the institution, not only to shew the authority by which he acteth . . . but also that . . . he may consecrate this bread and cup to be the symbols or antitypes of the Body and Blood of Christ. Then, as Christ offered up His Body and Blood to God the Father, under the symbols of bread and wine, as a sacrifice to be slain on the cross for our redemption; so here the priest offereth up this bread and cup as the symbols of His Body and Blood thus once offered up by Him; and thereby commemorateth it before God with thanksgiving; after which he prays that God would favourably accept their commemorative sacrifice by sending down upon it His Holy Spirit, that by His descent upon them He may make this bread and cup (already so far consecrated as to be the symbols or antitypes of the Body and

<sup>16</sup> A. W. Campbell, “Tractarianism in Scotland” (3) in *The Scottish Guardian*, 26 August 1946, 10.

<sup>17</sup> D. T. K. Drummond, *Historical Sketch of Episcopacy in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1845), 21. See the pamphlet collections previously at Coates Hall, Edinburgh and in the Dowden collection, especially vol. 531 — (both now in the National Library of Scotland (Edinburgh) for material related to the controversy).

Blood of Christ, and offered up as such) to be verily and indeed His Body and Blood. . . . Then the priest maketh intercession, in virtue of this Sacrifice thus offered up in commemoration of, and union with, the one great personal Sacrifice of Christ, for the whole Catholick Church, and pleadeth the merits of this one Sacrifice . . . not for the living only, but for the dead also . . .".<sup>18</sup>

Here there was evidently much that an evangelical might not like, even if he were able, unlike most of his brethren in the arguments of the eighteen forties, to avoid seeing the Pope of Rome behind every phrase. Though the presence of Christ in the eucharist was, it was stressed, not carnal but "by virtue and effect", the suspicious mind, despite the evidently Calvinist pedigree of this much-used phrase, could see nothing but transubstantiation. Though the concept of the eucharistic sacrifice was firmly tied to the "commemorative sacrifice" idea of the incorporation of the offerers in Christ, and the earthly showing forth of Christ's heavenly mediation, that same mind could see nothing but a new sacrifice which questioned the sufficiency of the one sacrifice of Christ. It may have been, perhaps, that such suspicions were fuelled by the high prestige of the Scottish Office in tractarian circles south of the border at this time, which were already showing signs of sympathy with Rome generally if not yet with Roman eucharistic theology. Certainly, however, the defence of the Office at this stage of the argument never seems to have gone further than a classically nonjuring one, in terms of the doctrine "held and taught by its compilers — and, be it added, by not a few Scots divines after them".<sup>19</sup>

Such doctrine was, in fact, still very much alive, as witnessed by the way in which the arguments of some of the Office's defenders so often echo (and could easily be mistaken for) the apologetic of a hundred years before. That apologetic was, in fact, frequently quoted as authoritative: there were still those in the Episcopal Church who saw the high nonjuring period as definitive of their faith. It was, however, those who had a different view who were probably most influential in obtaining the Office's temporary reprieve. These, the "moderates" who supported the Office and convinced an alarmed laity that charges of Romanism were unfounded, were often either Englishmen or, as Bishop Terrot put it, alluding to the north-eastern concentration of the nonjuring school, Scots "of the Edinburgh or trans Forthian type".<sup>20</sup> While dismissing proponents of that old school as "living on

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by J. Grisbrooke, *Anglican Liturgies*, 142.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>20</sup> Lochhead, *Episcopal Scotland*, 97.



romance”<sup>21</sup> these moderates were able to argue convincingly — except to the schismatic congregations<sup>22</sup> — that the two permitted services were identical in theology.

In this, at least, all but the evangelicals could agree, if sometimes for different reasons. Those brought up in the old nonjuring tradition were as firmly anti-Roman as any of their critics: “instead of thinking the Scotch office more Roman than the English, they firmly held the opposite view”,<sup>23</sup> regarding the concept of transubstantiation as a “hideous dogma”.<sup>24</sup> The English liturgy, they believed, was open to both Romanist and rationalist interpretation, appealing to adherents of both “as it does not contain anything explicitly opposed to their own peculiar though widely differing notions”.<sup>25</sup> By contrast, they held, their own service was catholic in the proper sense, conforming to “primitive” structure and explicit in a theology which affirmed Christ’s real presence while being simultaneously, in the argument, “the only effectual barrier against the doctrine of Transubstantiation”.<sup>26</sup> Thus, they claimed, though “the wilfully obstinate and blind might accuse the Church of Popish error . . . the enquiring and reflecting, the truly candid and unprejudiced, will perceive that, although her phraseology is seemingly strong, she adheres to the ‘usages of the primitive church’ — ‘the ways and forms of speech of the most holy Fathers’, and to guard against misconceptions, is careful to disclaim a carnal change in the elements”.<sup>27</sup>

The stress of the moderate defenders of the Office was quite different. Charles Wordsworth, for example — a representative “of that respectable and legal type of Anglicanism which regarded the non-juring tradition as an infatuation”<sup>28</sup> — was careful to distance himself from a specifically nonjuring interpretation of it. He might well have agreed with his co-defenders that the two services “teach the same holy and scriptural truths — both equally remote from the Romish dogma of the corporal presence and the ultra-protestant one of a mere commemoration in the Holy

<sup>21</sup> W. Perry, *George Hay Forbes* (London, 1927), 86.

<sup>22</sup> The schismatic congregations were unimpressed in the main, and “English Episcopal” chapels were to exist in Scotland well into the twentieth century.

<sup>23</sup> W. Walker, *Reminiscences, Academic, Ecclesiastic, and Scholastic* (Aberdeen, 1904), 121.

<sup>24</sup> R. Montgomery, “A Letter on the Recent Schisms in Scotland” (Edinburgh, 1846), 38.

<sup>25</sup> Anon. (“A Priest of the Church in Scotland”), *A Letter on the Scottish Communion Office* . . . (Edinburgh, 1847), 17.

<sup>26</sup> Torry, *A Pastoral Letter*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> J. Christie, *The Oblation and Invocation in the Scottish Communion Office Vindicated* (Aberdeen, 1844), 27.

<sup>28</sup> Perry, *George Hay Forbes*.

Eucharist".<sup>29</sup> He would not, however, have gone on to claim that the proper doctrines that the two upheld could be found in the English service only "by plain implication, obvious inference, and statements more or less explicit", while in the Scots one they were to be found "clearly and broadly enunciated, and without the possibility of heretical perversion".<sup>30</sup> The moderates argued the possibility of using the Scottish liturgy; the old school proclaimed its clear superiority.

The abortive publication of Bishop Torry's Scottish Prayer Book, in 1850, was to demonstrate clearly how wide this cleavage actually was. The differences between the new book and the English Book of Common Prayer lay chiefly in the substitution of the Scottish for the English eucharistic rite, the use of the sign of the cross in the rite of confirmation, the addition of certain saints' days to the calendar, and, most controversially (though certainly in accordance with long-standing custom in some congregations in the nonjuring tradition), provision for the communion of the sick from the reserved sacrament. The resulting battle was fierce, and several of the erstwhile moderate defenders of the Office were among the most vociferous of the successful opponents of this attempt to give formal approval to the nonjuring approach to liturgy.<sup>31</sup> From this time on, moderate support for the retention of the Office was to become increasingly half-hearted until, by the early sixties, many of those who had given such support were among the firmest supporters of the proposed new canons which were either to abolish it altogether or — as it eventually turned out — to relegate it from doctrinal pre-eminence to bare toleration.

It was not this cleavage alone which was to change the climate of opinion, however. As important as theological arguments was a social trend. Despair at the time of Torry's book at those who were "English, and do not understand us Scotch people"<sup>32</sup> was, even then, nothing new. That "the great majority of the laity are not at heart Scotch Episcopalians but Church of England men"<sup>33</sup> had been noted several years previously. Opponents of the Scottish Office had already been accused either of looking on it "in no other light than as a bar in the way of the greater temporal advantages to be gained from a closer connection with the Church of England",<sup>34</sup> or else of believing "that to be Scotch in anything,

<sup>29</sup> SRO, MS. Memorial to their Bishop by 18 Presbyters of the Diocese of Aberdeen (Episcopal Chest MS. 2188).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> For details of the successful opposition to the book's publication see e.g. Neale, *Torry*, 264ff. Not until 1929 was a similar book officially published.

<sup>32</sup> SRO, MS. letter, W. Forbes to Bp. Torry, 13 Sept. 1850 (Episcopal Chest MS. 2411).

<sup>33</sup> Campbell, "Tractarianism in Scotland".

<sup>34</sup> Anon. ("A Layman" — actually G. H. Forbes), *The Christian Sacrifice in the Eucharist* (Edinburgh, 1844), 1.

where it is possible to be English, implies a sort of degradation".<sup>35</sup> In reaction to this, a sort of nationalism inevitably arose in which theological appeals to the "great Scotch authorities"<sup>36</sup> contained an implicit appeal as much to their Scottishness as to their theological authority. As far as the Office was concerned, it became not only "anything but creditable as Churchmen", but also far from "patriotic in us, as Scotchmen, to relinquish it".<sup>37</sup> "Only think", wrote Bishop Torry to his son, "how the gentlemen of the law, & all others who have true Scottish feelings, would bristle up, were any one to step forward with a proposal to sweep away what is peculiar to our System of political Law and substitute for it the System of England. Would they not plead with indignation that should such a proposal be ever realized, Scotland would dwindle into a province of England, and lose all its characteristic distinction?".<sup>38</sup>

Torry's, though, was a voice from a dying generation, unscarred by that anglophilism characteristic of the rising one. By the time of the Prayer Book controversy, his was one of only a few influential voices that were not English either by birth or education. In southern Scotland, as the 1851 clergy figures bear witness, a priest of Scottish ordination was a rarity. Whereas in the nonjuring stronghold of the diocese of Aberdeen twenty one of the twenty three clergy were ordained in Scotland, this was true of only four out of twenty two in Edinburgh, and of nine out of twenty two in Glasgow and Galloway.<sup>39</sup> Within only a very few years, with Torry's death, influential defenders of the nonjuring tradition were few indeed, the only one now being remembered being G. H. Forbes.<sup>40</sup> Conformity with England was, by the 1860s, a natural instinct for most episcopalians in Scotland of whatever nationality, who exhibited "a growing desire to come nearer in spirit and action to the English Church — a desire which . . . will end in an entire assimilation [it being] towards this object that we desire to work".<sup>41</sup>

Another factor at work was an anachronistic legality. Priests of Scottish episcopalian ordination were forbidden, by law, to

<sup>35</sup> Anon ("A Priest of the Church in Scotland"), *A Letter on the Scottish Communion Office*, 2.

<sup>36</sup> W. G. Shaw, *An Analysis and Refutation of Certain Erroneous Views . . .* (Edinburgh, 1858), 8.

<sup>37</sup> P. Torry, *A Pastoral Letter*, 12.

<sup>38</sup> SRO, MS. letter, Bp. Torry to Dean Torry (Episcopal Chest MS. 2391).

<sup>39</sup> Figures from tables in the *Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal*, i (Edinburgh, 1851), 94ff.

<sup>40</sup> Perry *George Hay Forbes* is a readable biography. Forbes' scholarship was sufficient for Migne to consider him a suitable collaborator, though the plan came to nothing. He should not be confused with his brother, Bishop Alexander Forbes.

<sup>41</sup> *The Scottish Guardian* (1864) 255.



become incumbents of English parishes. That this had “no more to do with the Faith of the Scottish church than . . . with the Kilts or bagpipes of its highland members”<sup>42</sup> was not obvious to everyone. As the Scottish bishops had already pointed out, at the time of legislation in 1840 which only partially remedied the anachronism, “From their not being allowed to officiate in England, it is concluded by the great body of their countrymen, and suspected, it may be, by some of their own persuasion, that there must be some defect in their clerical authority . . .”<sup>43</sup> The reaction of some of the English and Irish bishops to the breakaway “Church of England” congregations of the early forties only compounded this problem,<sup>44</sup> as did their studied refusal, in spite of their affirmation of “full spiritual communion” between the two churches, to push for the repeal of these civil disabilities through their position in the House of Lords. By 1862, with new canons which would displace the Scottish Liturgy from its former position being drafted, it was felt necessary by some to protest at the attempts of some English bishops “to press . . . a concession on the Scottish church, by suggesting the notion that co-operation of the English bishops in Parliament, for the removal of an unjust political disability from the clergy of Scottish ordination, is to be purchased by the sacrifice of their long established national liturgy”.<sup>45</sup> It was widely understood, however, that the new canons containing this sacrifice would be necessary to persuade the English bishops to use their power. As Bishop Ewing put it, “The Church is sinking gradually, and will ere long be extinct, unless liberated from its present false position. It is well known that that which keeps us in this false position is the inability of the Episcopate in England and Ireland to declare our faith to be in accordance with the general standards which we receive”.<sup>46</sup>

Other arguments for the sacrifice of the liturgy were pastoral and ecumenical. Some, like Bishop Low, argued that “no advantage arising from the maintenance of a separate national formulary could counterbalance the evil of retaining an office which proved, however unduly, a stumbling-block to ‘weak brethren’, or an excuse by which unruly men justified their secession from the Church”.<sup>47</sup> Some also, after the established church’s own schism of 1843, felt that its remnant might well have looked for union “in the direction of the Establishment of England and Ireland”,<sup>48</sup> and believed that, in the light of that possibility,

<sup>42</sup> Anon. (“An English Parish Priest”), *A General Synod* . . . (Edinburgh, 1862), 11.

<sup>43</sup> W. Blatch, *A Memoir of the Right Rev. David Low* . . . (London, 1855), 225.

<sup>44</sup> See e.g. C. Terrot, *A Letter to the Lord Bishop of Cashel* . . . (Edinburgh, 1845).

<sup>45</sup> Anon. (“An English Parish Priest”), *A General Synod*, 13.

<sup>46</sup> The Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, *A Pastoral Letter* (Edinburgh, 1863), 9.

<sup>47</sup> Blatch, *Memoir*, 273.

<sup>48</sup> The Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, *A Pastoral Letter*, 4.

a separate Scottish form of Anglicanism could be counter-productive. These and other pragmatic arguments were undoubtedly influential, especially in the generally anglophile climate of the time.

Another major — if negative — factor was, however, possibly decisive. This was that although the remaining members of the nonjuring school had continued individually to uphold the claim of the Office, the school as such had, by the early sixties, been torn apart by what was known as the eucharistic controversy. In 1842, Bishop Russell had been able to claim, without a murmur of disagreement, that the “Oxford Movement” in England merely represented a catching up with what had long been true of the episcopalianism of Scotland.<sup>49</sup> Southern tractarians, at that time, held the Scottish tradition and liturgy in high regard. As late as 1850, by which time the lure of Rome was becoming powerful among English churchmen, it was still a calm boast among episcopalians north of the border that none of their “native” clergy had been seduced by her charms.<sup>50</sup> Still, at this stage, Scottish Episcopalianism enjoyed high prestige in “high church” circles south of the border — so much so, that when the Gorham controversy there was seen to threaten the Church of England’s upholding of the catholic faith, it was “rumoured that there are to be extensive emigrations into Scotland. . . .”<sup>51</sup> (J. M. Neale was to comment, at the time, “I am not shaken in fidelity to our Church; and if I was, I should go not to Rome, but to Scotland”.<sup>52</sup>) Within only a few years, in stark contrast to this adulation, extreme Anglo-catholic opinion was to assert that the Scottish Liturgy was “not Catholic”, and that “the Eucharistic tenets of the ‘Indigenous Scotch Clergy’ are unsound and rotten at the core”.<sup>53</sup> It was, essentially, the development of eucharistic doctrine, of which this reversal of opinion was a symptom, that was to cause the eucharistic controversy of the late fifties and to split the old nonjuring school.

The controversy focused on the eucharistic opinions of two men, Alexander Forbes, Bishop of Brechin, and Patrick Cheyne, a priest. Both were separately, and with different degrees of severity, disciplined for publishing views which were held to be contrary to the church’s teaching and which seemed, to their critics, perilously close to those characteristic of Roman teaching on the real presence and the eucharistic sacrifice. What is most interesting

<sup>49</sup> M. Russell, *Charge Delivered . . . May 4th, 1842* (n.d.).

<sup>50</sup> See e.g. A. Lendrum, *The Church of Scotland Her Own Best Advocate* (Edinburgh, 1850), 12.

<sup>51</sup> Anon. (“A Scottish Presbyter”), *A Letter to the Right Revd. the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway* (Edinburgh, 1850), 12.

<sup>52</sup> *The Letters of John Mason Neale*, ed. M. Lawson (London, 1910), 142.

<sup>53</sup> Shaw, *Analysis*.

about those views, however, from the point of view of the present study, is not their specific content but the views of their holders about their relationship to the eucharistic teaching of the nonjurors. Cheyne claimed that what he had written merely represented what Scottish episcopalians had believed for over a century. Forbes, by contrast, as one of his critics noted, not only “gave no testimony whatever from our great Scotch authorities”, but also alluded to those authorities “as seeming to advocate a Rationalistic Theory — an imperfect view”.<sup>54</sup> The two men had, however, very similar views, though it would be simplistic to claim, as did one of their opponents, that the two men differed solely in tactics, the bishop making “certain dialectical definitions and distinctions, in no way affecting the essence of his doctrines, but only clothing them in an impenetrable robe of obscurity, while Mr. Cheyne vouchsafed no comments, but simply adhered to his opinions”.<sup>55</sup> Many, however, supporters<sup>56</sup> as well as enemies, recognized that the differences between their views — if not in the subtlety of their presentation — were slight. They received support, in practice, both from those who had views formed and sustained by English tractarianism like Henry Humble of Perth cathedral,<sup>57</sup> and from those whose roots were in the Scottish nonjuring tradition, like Alexander Lendrum, formerly a collaborator with G. H. Forbes (the bishop’s brother) in the production of Torry’s prayer book. The former group tended, like Bishop Forbes, to be critical of the old Scots tradition, the latter, like Cheyne, to proclaim their continuing adherence to it.

The historical approach which romanticises the nonjuring period as the precursor of modern Anglo-catholicism implicitly supports Cheyne’s view of the matter. Whether or not this is doctrinally correct (and the argument now, as then, is a remarkably subtle one), it is important to recognize that it was certainly not a view which received universal acceptance within the nonjuring school itself. Already, before the controversy, John Alexander — who had founded St Columba’s, Edinburgh, specifically to keep the national liturgy alive in the capital — had found it necessary to warn “against the innovations of a new and dangerous school of theological teaching, which has recently sprung up in the South . . . which appears to labour, with all its might, to obliterate that bold and well-defined line of demarcation which, according to the testimony of our best divines, has hitherto been held to separate

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* In this respect the bishop had sharply different views to those of his brother G. H. Forbes (see note 40).

<sup>55</sup> Quoted by W. Humphrey S.J., *Recollections of Scottish Episcopalianism* (London, 1896), 7.

<sup>56</sup> See e.g. M. MacColl, *Mr Cheyne and the Bishop of Brechin* (Edinburgh, 1860).

<sup>57</sup> H. Humble, *The Recent Episcopal Decisions* (Edinburgh, 1858); and *Remarks on a Recent Debate in Convocation* (Edinburgh, 1862).



Catholicism from Romanism".<sup>58</sup> The warning was prophetic. Previously, with the exception of "a few individuals of English ordination",<sup>59</sup> the Episcopal Church had been "a stranger to those parties which exist in the south".<sup>60</sup> Now, the old and sometimes uneasy theological consensus evaporated. With the "new" ideas adopted by at least some of the old school, others, also "of the genuine native type, beheld, with dismay, a hitherto venerated hand raised deliberately, as it seemed, 'to remove the ancient landmarks which their fathers had set'".<sup>61</sup> The views of Forbes and Cheyne were, in their view, "imported into this country in our day",<sup>62</sup> and they complained bitterly of "the delusion . . . that the doctrines which they persist in maintaining, in defiance of all authority, are the same as those which have ever been held and taught by their forefathers in the Scottish Church".<sup>63</sup>

The anonymous pamphleteer who made this last comment perhaps gets to the heart of the matter. He not only demonstrates that the traditional nonjuring language of "virtue and effect" had disappeared from the writing of those who claimed that they were merely expounding the old tradition, though they had used it freely only a decade previously. He also explains the change, by referring to an article in the Anglo-Catholic "Union" periodical, referring to William Bright, whose "advanced" views had cost him his post at the Scottish theological college at Glenalmond. Although, said that article, Bright would now "entirely disavow the teaching as to virtue and effect, which he did for a short time adopt in 1852 . . . then neither had been published Archdeacon Wilberforce's book, nor the laborious work of Dr Pusey. It is no shame to him to have adopted a theory which seven years ago was considered as embodying the highest teaching in our communion".<sup>64</sup>

Quite simply, the old classical high Anglican approach, still acceptable in even the "highest" circles only a few years before,<sup>65</sup> had, by the late fifties, become suspect as one which, "pushed to its legitimate conclusion, is Calvinism".<sup>66</sup> Such a suspicion was, in fact, not without foundation, as the reaction to the controversy of

<sup>58</sup> J. Alexander, *A Letter to the Right Rev. William Skinner* (Edinburgh, 1854), 4.

<sup>59</sup> Anon. ("A Priest of the Church in Scotland"), *A Letter on the Scottish Communion Office*, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Anon. (William Palmer of Magdalen College, Oxford), *A Harmony of Anglican Doctrine with the Doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East* (Aberdeen, 1846), p. xii. (For an account of Palmer's attempt to use the old episcopal tradition to foster Anglican-Orthodox relations, see Knight, "Anglican or Orthodox?")

<sup>61</sup> W. Walker, *The Proceedings of the Aberdeen Synod* (Aberdeen, 1859), 16.

<sup>62</sup> W. Farquar, *A Few Thoughts on the Eucharistic Question* (Forfar, 1858), 6.

<sup>63</sup> Anon. ("A Presbyterian"), *The Recent Decisions of the Episcopal Synod* (Edinburgh, 1859), 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>65</sup> Humble, *Remarks*, 63.

<sup>66</sup> J. Grisbrooke, *Anglican Liturgies*, xv.

some of the old school was to demonstrate. A sad confusion of terminology was to arise among those for whom the old terminology was sacred but to whom the “dynamic virtualism”<sup>67</sup> of its philosophical foundation was unclear. Some still talked, in the old way, of a “real” presence; others — in an attempt to avoid a “substantial” one — of a “virtual” one.<sup>68</sup> Some adopted the term substantial itself, but only to assert “the bare fact of Christ’s presence”.<sup>69</sup> G. H. Forbes, for all his great scholarship, was even to assert that the old Scots tradition implied a theory of “real absence”.<sup>70</sup>

The resulting incoherence of the defence of the old tradition was compounded by the support that it now also received from some of the moderates who had previously regarded it as sheer sentimentalism. Now, perceiving it as a possible bulwark against the new sympathy for a more characteristically Roman approach, they lent their support, and some curious alliances evolved. As extreme Anglo-catholic opinion now “preferred the English service as being more in unison with the Roman rite”,<sup>71</sup> so now some moderate anglophiles discovered a new-found sympathy with the Scottish liturgy — at any rate for as long as it could enable them to score debating points. In all this confusion, anything of a genuine survival of the old nonjuring approach was effectively obscured. If the nonjurors of the eighteenth century had been able to use a vocabulary with a Calvinist pedigree in a way which transcended the limitations of its origins, among the nineteenth-century supporters of the old vocabulary and of the “great Scotch authorities”, there was little evidence of the dynamism of the theology which their predecessors had developed. The static philosophical categories of western medieval theology, inherited by both Roman and protestant traditions, were taken for granted on both sides, and the true glory of the nonjuring tradition — its rediscovery of the dynamic categories of patristic thought — seldom informed the debate.

The canons of 1863 — which relegated the Scottish Communion Office from doctrinal pre-eminence to mere toleration — were thus passed in an atmosphere in which the theological arguments were obscure and confused, and the pragmatic arguments apparently clear. Within a few years, the Scottish Episcopal Church had sunk comfortably into an existence as a

<sup>67</sup> See e.g. SRO, Episcopal Chest MS., 2188, or Anon. (“A Priest of the Church in Scotland”), *A Letter on the Scottish Communion Office*.

<sup>68</sup> See e.g. Alexander, *A Letter to . . . Skinner*.

<sup>69</sup> Anon. (“A Presbyterian”), *A Modest Reply to the Rev. W. G. Shaw’s Pamphlet* (Edinburgh, 1858), 23.

<sup>70</sup> Perry, *George Hay Forbes*, 100; see also the letter to him from John Pratt of 4 Jan. 1860 among Forbes MSS. in University of St Andrews.

<sup>71</sup> Humphrey, *Recollections*, 5.

small province of the Anglican Communion, more “catholic” than the English ones, but with all traces of its former “native” distinctiveness apparently disappearing. The revival of interest in the Scottish tradition and liturgy that occurred later in the century was partly linked, perhaps, to the sort of sentimental quasi-nationalism that took a new interest, at that time, in the episcopalians’ Jacobite past. Whatever its roots, however, its view of the nonjuring days was blind to such evidence as questioned its assumptions. What the very Scots black-gowned nonjuror of the end of the eighteenth century would have made, a century later, of the antics and beliefs of one of his gorgeously vested, Anglo-catholic, and probably English successors, it is difficult to tell with certainty. The full evidence suggests, however, that he would have been at least as likely to lament the death of episcopalian Scotland as to rejoice — as his successor would assume that he would — at its continuation and fulfilment.

About some of the developments of the twentieth century our hypothetical late eighteenth-century nonjuror might feel rather happier. The rediscovery of parts of the Scottish nonjuring tradition among his fellow episcopalians, and their restoration of the Scottish eucharistic liturgy at least to parity with the English one, would undoubtedly receive his approbation. The Scottish Liturgy of 1982 might, indeed, delight him, not only because of its independence of any English liturgical revision, but also because of its creative adaption of the patristic structure and theology that had informed the service of 1764. Beyond the confines of his own community, moreover, he might well feel that the widespread adoption of some of his “patristic” theological perspectives among Christians of many traditions had justified his “excessive fondness for the Vincentian rule, *Quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*”.<sup>72</sup> The tensions of being a church in communion with that established in England rather than that in Scotland, however, and of being one in which many of the influential voices are English rather than Scottish, he might find remarkably akin to the situation which had faced him as he contemplated union with the qualified congregations at the end of the eighteenth century. The problem of being true to Scottish roots within an Anglican framework is one that has not gone away.

<sup>72</sup> C. Terrot, *A Letter to the Lord Bishop of Cashel* (Edinburgh, 1845), 5.



